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ISSUE 19 VOLUME 38

FARRAGUT, TENNESSEE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026 • 1A



Tony Christen

Speed cushions like those found on Red Mill Road have been approved for portions of Union Road and Midhurst Drive.

Roads get cushions, drivers hit the brakes

Tammy Cheek

tcheek@farragutpress.com

Two Farragut roads will receive traffic-calming speed cushions as the Town's construction schedule allows.

Farragut Board of Mayor and Aldermen voted unanimously Thursday, Jan. 8, to approve the installation of speed cushions on portions of Union Road and Midhurst Drive.

Following resident applications submitted Aug. 29, 2024, assistant Town engineer Eric Schindler proposed installing two sets of speed cushions on Union Road between Everett Road and Smith Road.

"A speed study was conducted and determined that excessive speeding is present in the speed zone," Schindler said. "Excessive speeding is defined as an 85th-percentile speed greater than 10 mph over the posted speed limit of 25 mph."

He said the study showed average vehicle speeds of 39 mph to 40 mph at one proposed location near 12415 Union Road, depending on direction of travel. At another proposed location near 12504 Union Road, average speeds ranged from 38 mph to 43 mph.

During an Aug. 6, 2025, public meeting, Schindler said resident support for the project was strong.

"The Traffic Calming Policy requires that more than 50 percent of the returned ballots from the speed zone be in favor of traffic-calming devices," he said. "Sixteen ballots were mailed and seven were returned, with six — or 86 percent — supporting the installation."

Farragut Municipal Planning Commission later voted unanimously to recommend approval.

Schindler said the proposed speed cushions are made of injection-molded composite material and measure approximately 78 inches wide, 80 inches long and 3 inches tall at the highest point. The cushions are designed for vehicle speeds of 15 to 20 mph.

The estimated cost to install the two bolt-down speed cushions on Union Road is \$6,000.

The board also approved three speed cushions on Midhurst Drive, to be installed between the eastern intersection of Foxford Drive and Barbara Lane. Each speed cushion will be installed at 11605 Midhurst Drive, 11550 Midhurst Drive and 11534 Midhurst Drive.

See CUSHIONS on Page 3A

Keeping Warm, Part 2 of 3

Knox County programs help homeless veterans stay warm

Tammy Cheek

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KNOXVILLE — An estimated 140 veterans in Knox County are facing homelessness and cold temperatures this winter, but local programs are stepping in to help.

Operation Vet Rescue, founded in 2024, provides emergency assistance, outreach and access to critical resources for at-risk veterans, said Janet Trust, the organization's operation director.

Based in Greenback,

the nonprofit serves veterans across East Tennessee through community partnerships.

"Our winter warming station ensures no veteran is left exposed to life-threatening cold," Trust said. "We provide a safe, heated space, cold-weather gear, hot beverages, light food, hygiene items and referrals for housing, medical care, mental health services and veteran benefits — all at no cost."

See WARM on Page 2A



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ASSOCIATES

Town proclaims Founders Week; Betty Dick Day set

Tammy Cheek

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Near the anniversary of Farragut's incorporation on Jan. 16, 1980, the Town honored its founding leaders with a proclamation designating the third week of January as Founders Week. The recognition came during the Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting Thursday, Jan. 8, and highlighted the grassroots effort that led to Farragut becoming a municipality 46 years ago.

One founding member, Betty Dick, also received a separate proclamation establishing Betty Dick Day for her service and early advocacy.

Mayor Ron Williams read from the proclamation noting residents in southwest Knox County grew concerned in the 1970s about low development

standards and commercial growth. A group later known as the Farragut Community Group pushed to incorporate after feeling their concerns were ignored by county officials.

The proclamation stated the group spent hours registering voters, mapping boundaries and convincing neighbors incorporation could be achieved without new taxes. After incorporation was approved Jan. 16, 1980, the group resisted annexation efforts and secured Farragut's share of sales tax revenue. The Town elected its first Board of Mayor and Aldermen on April 1, 1980.

Founders recognized include Ralph McGill, Eric Johnson, Betty Dick, Ron Simandl, Gene McNalley, George Dorsey and David Rodgers.

"It's important to remind

our community why we were founded," former alderman and current Municipal Planning Commission member Louise Povlin said during citizens forum, noting the founders sought stronger development standards and better planning at the local level.

Dick's individual proclamation cited her work through the Village Green Homeowners Association, her appearances before county planning bodies and her role helping craft Farragut's first sign ordinance. After incorporation, she served three terms as North Ward alderman and later served on the Town's Visual Resources Review Board and Municipal Planning Commission.

To honor those contributions, the Board declared the third Thursday of January as Betty Dick Day.

Lawmakers

From page 1A

jor topic.

"We really have a crisis in the state of Tennessee on transportation," said Rep. David Wright of District 19, which includes Halls. He said he and Massey recently traveled out of state to study transportation solutions.

"If I wanted to get from Coryton to here, I couldn't build a road to get here," Wright said. "We, as a governmental entity, need to work on infrastructure for transportation."

"It is a challenge," said Massey, who chairs the Transportation and Safety Committees. She noted newer vehicles get better gas mileage, reducing fuel tax revenue, while the cost of road construction continues to rise.

She added the interstates are the state's responsibility while more people are moving to Tennessee and putting more wear and tear on the roads.

"We're trying to look at responsible ways to increase revenue that do not burden any one place," Massey said.

She said lawmakers need a multifaceted revenue approach that does not rely solely on tourism-related taxes.

However, "Our biggest challenge is going to be the budget," Massey said. "Revenue growth projections are not meeting what our inflationary costs are, so we're going to have some hard choices."

Massey also discussed health care initiatives, including Tennessee's participation in a federal rural health transformation program.

"We're getting the federal government's rural health transformation program," Massey said. "That's looking at doing a number of new, innovative programs — not investing in brick-and-mortar, not investing in things that need reoccurring expenses — but can help move the needle on the health of our citizens

because we're typically right around 40th, 41st worst state in the country in overall health of our Tennesseans.

"So, anything we can do that can kind of help there ... we really ought to work on it," she added.

Election integrity was another issue raised.

"This is important not only to Tennesseans, but to the whole country," said Briggs, who chairs the State and Local Government Committee. He noted the Heritage Foundation recently ranked Tennessee No. 1 in election integrity.

"That doesn't mean we're not working to make it better," Briggs said.

On another matter, "We have a lot of lower-income people who live in apartment buildings or low-income housing, and they would love to take a couple kids for day care," he said, noting the current regulations would hinder that.

"Many of these people who want to babysit, they're already on food stamps; they're on TennCare; they're on all these government programs,"

Briggs said. "They would be able to take in a certain number of kids, babysit them and earn a pretty good income."

Also, Davis said she plans to introduce legislation promoting non-opioid alternatives for pain management, particularly in prisons.

"There are alternatives to pain treatment that are not opioid medications," she said, adding she wants insurers to cover those options.

Zachary, a member of the Finance Committee, emphasized fiscal responsibility.

"The only thing we are constitutionally required to do as a legislature is pass a balanced budget," he said. "You can't balance a budget with one-time dollars."

He credited tax cuts, reduced regulation and limited government growth with strengthening the state's economy.

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Letter to the Editor

January 16th marks the 46th anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Farragut. In the late 70s, development activity increased in the Farragut area. The Town founders were alarmed by Knox County's lack of development standards and after several frustrating years of trying to bring some attention to the lack of standards, they decided to incorporate to establish higher standards to govern the inevitable growth in the area. The area residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of incorporation and the Town of Farragut was established.

The reasons the Town founders were motivated to incorporate Farragut are as relevant today as they were in 1979. The Town founders wanted our own zoning code and development standards to protect the existing neighborhoods from incompatible development, and to protect and enhance our residential character. They wanted better stormwater regulations, higher road standards and planning for our transportation network. They wanted to declutter our right of ways, they wanted a tree preservation program, and landscaping standards for our commercial areas, they wanted architectural standards to hide HVAC units and screen trash containers.

Once high development standards were in place, Farragut's Board of Mayor and Aldermen, under Mayor Bob Leonard's leadership, turned their attention to laying the foundation for the future growth and development of our community that would best protect and enhance our residential character. They were not striving to replicate any other Town. They sought to build a special place, distinct and unique to us and true to our values. They wanted to establish our identity and our community character recognizing that much of the zoning along Kingston Pike was already determined.

They envisioned parks, at least one in each quadrant, a connected sidewalk/trail system, a Town Hall, a public works facility, a museum to preserve and celebrate our history and the history of the area, a library, a post office and a Farragut zip code, mixed use developments that provide for festive shopping areas, a well thought out transportation network to address safety, capacity and connectivity, street lights, and underground utilities.

The Biddle Farms development, the preservation of the Campbell Station Inn, the establishment and continued expansion of Light the Park are the most recent examples in the long list of intentional decisions that connect through multiple mayoral administrations aimed at establishing a unique and distinct community character.

The Town of Farragut is one of the top ranked residential communities in the State of Tennessee. This did not happen by accident, and it did not happen overnight. The success of Farragut, the desirability of Farragut lies in the consistent implementation of the aspirational vision for our Town established under Mayor Bob Leonard. Every administration since Mayor Leonard's has remained consistent in fulfilling the aspirations laid out in the 1980s.

~ Louise Povlin

Deadline for Letters to the Editor and Presstalks is **Monday at 10 a.m.** for that Wednesday's edition.

KCSO police reports

On Dec. 29 a woman reported that her estranged husband used her personal information, including her name, driver's license number and Social Security number, to fraudulently apply for an apartment lease without her consent. The incident reportedly occurred between Dec. 25 and Dec. 26, 2025, at a Farragut apartment complex.

According to the report, the man informed the victim via text that he had secured an apartment listing both their names. When she contacted the apartment complex, the manager said they had been in contact with someone they believed to be the victim who gave consent for him to live there. It was later discovered that the suspect's sister had impersonated the victim during those communications.

As of the report date, the suspect had not been evicted. He is also facing a separate domestic assault charge in Roane County.

On Dec. 29 a Farragut resident reported losing \$700 in a fraud scheme in which a suspect posed as his pastor and requested donations through e-mail, according to the Knox County Sheriff's Office.

The victim told deputies he was contacted by an unknown suspect between Dec. 27 and Dec.

29 through e-mail. The suspect allegedly claimed to be the victim's pastor and asked for financial donations.

According to the report, the victim was instructed to purchase \$100 Macy's gift cards, then provide the card codes by scanning and sending images of the backs of the cards. The victim said he sent codes from seven gift cards totaling \$700.

The offense was classified as fraud by false pretenses, a misdemeanor. The suspect was listed as unknown.

Knox County Sheriff's Office is investigating a felony theft reported Dec. 31, 2025 at a Brochart Boulevard residence in Farragut.

According to the report, the victim told deputies she hired a moving company to help move furniture inside her home between Nov. 11 and Dec. 31. When she attempted to pay by check, she was told the movers could only accept debit or credit cards. She left her checkbook on a table while paying by card.

The victim said one mover distracted her in another area of the home while the second mover allegedly removed checks from the checkbook. She later discovered four checks missing. Two of the checks were written and cashed

at separate bank branches located within Knoxville Police Department jurisdiction.

The moving company provided the names of the two employees who were working in the home at the time of the alleged theft. The victim was advised to file separate fraud and forgery reports with Knoxville police.

Deputies with the Knox County Sheriff's Office are investigating a felony shoplifting report involving stolen cosmetics from a N. Campbell Station Road drug store.

According to the report, the incident occurred about 5:48 p.m. Dec. 28. Store management reported two suspects entered the pharmacy and stole a large quantity of cosmetic items before leaving the store.

The stolen merchandise included Elf-brand cosmetics valued at \$1,078.84 and Maybelline lipsticks and liquid foundation valued at \$224, for a total reported loss of \$1,302.84.

The suspects were described as a white male, approximately 6 feet 1 inch tall and about 400 pounds, bald, wearing blue jeans, a white T-shirt and a dark jacket, and a white female, approximately 5 feet 6 inches tall and weighing between 170 and 180 pounds, with blond hair, wearing blue

jeans, a white T-shirt and a tan jacket. The female suspect was reported to be carrying a large black tote-style purse.

Store employees later recognized the suspects when they returned to the store around 4:55 p.m. the following day. According to the report, the suspects purchased an item and left after a brief verbal exchange. They were last seen leaving in an older gold four-door sedan with a sunroof.

Knox County Sheriff's Office is investigating a reported theft, fraud and forgery incident that occurred between Dec. 21 and Dec. 23, 2025, at a Battle Front Trail residence in Farragut County.

According to the report, the victim told deputies he placed a check in his mailbox intended as a credit card payment. The victim later received notice that the payment was late and discovered the check had been fraudulently deposited through a mobile banking transaction. Investigators reported the payee name on the check was altered to that of the suspect.

The case includes felony charges of theft, false pretenses and forgery. A suspect was identified, though no arrest information was listed in the report.

mailed, and 14 were returned, with 13—or 93 percent—in favor of traffic-calming devices," he said.

Schindler said resident feedback at an Aug. 7, 2025, public meeting was similarly positive.

"Twenty-six ballots were

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Wild Wings Café takes flight again

Coming back to Farragut
after four-year hiatus

Tammy Cheek

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“Something wild is back,” Wild Wings Café owner David McFarland said about re-opening Wild Wings Café at 11335 Campbell Lakes Drive in Farragut after a four-year hiatus.

McFarland is planning a grand opening Friday, Jan. 16, starting at 4 p.m. until midnight.

“We’re so excited, he said about the opening. “It’s a long time coming. When I went in this direction [to re-open], I didn’t think it would take this long.

“So many people are excited about it coming back,” he added.

Its patrons can expect “Farragut’s home for hot wings, cold beer and good times to be back better than ever,” he said, teasing to a planned Voice Off competition in February.

There also is its patio and great local and regional live entertainment.

“We’ve got a great lineup

already starting, including Ann Betty, Smooth Sailor, Max Stillwell, Tall Paul and other various entertainers,” McFarland said. “And the best place to catch a game.”

And then, of course, there are the wings.

“I can’t give you the secret, but I would say that we make our marinades from scratch,” he said. “Not a lot of people know that. Almost everything that comes out of the kitchen is made from scratch.”

“That’s part of our direction,” McFarland said. “That’s why it’s important, and that’s why it tastes so good. A lot of love goes in it.”

Besides wings, patrons will find burgers, wraps, ultimate nachos, salads and grilled items for people looking for healthier options on the menu.

“And, we’ll have a few new things coming on here, some new, exciting surprises,” he added.

Still, “we’re sticking to our roots,” McFarland assured.

“It’s the Wild Wing Café, and



Tammy Cheek

Dave McFarland, owner of Wild Wings Café, is re-opening Wild Wings Café in its original location.

we won Best Wings in Knoxville I don’t know how many times.

Patrons will be able to order a flight of wings with five different flavors of its current 34 flavors, they can eat all themselves or share it with family and friends.

The restaurant will be open from 4 p.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday, and from 4 p.m. to 1 p.m., Friday and Saturday.

Wild Wings Café, which first opened in 2007, had a long-

standing history in Farragut, from its live entertainment, voice-off competitions, epic Cinco de Mayo parties and community involvement to its wake-boarding on the pond.

But, McFarland wanted more for his restaurant.

“We were heading in another direction than the franchiser,” he explained.

So, he chose not to sign another agreement with the corporate Wild Wings Café and closed the restaurant.

After negotiations, though,

McFarland’s restaurant eventually broke away from the corporate franchiser and now is a “truly independently, locally owned and operated—no longer a franchisee—[establishment],” he said. “We are so excited to bring it back.”

While it took awhile, “We were able to break away from corporate and become our own Wild Wing Café,” he said. “Now, I’m able to have the direction I believe in.”

McFarland added his Powell location also is independent.

Covenant expands with Northshore clinic



Photo submitted

Covenant Health officials and supporters gathered at Covenant Health’s Urgent Care Center at 902 Osprey Pointe Lane, off South Northshore Drive, to cut the ribbon on the new facility Monday, Dec. 15.

Tammy Cheek

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Covenant Health has opened a seventh urgent care clinic as the not-for-profit hospital system expands walk-in medical services in West Knox County.

Covenant Health Urgent Care-Northshore held a ribbon cutting Monday, Dec. 15. The clinic, at 902 Osprey Pointe Lane off Northshore Drive, provides X-rays, labs, bloodwork and flu and COVID-19 testing. It accepts most major insurance plans and began seeing patients Dec. 16.

Executives described urgent care as a key point of entry into Covenant’s healthcare system.

“For many patients, urgent care is their first step into Covenant Health,” said Jon-David Deeson, executive vice president of Physician Enterprise and Ambulatory Services.

Urgent Care Group CEO Matt Kossman said the partnership aims to deliver “high-quality, convenient and affordable care” while connecting patients to physicians and specialty services when needed.

Farragut West Knox Chamber of Commerce president/

CEO Julie Blaylock said urgent care reduces pressure on emergency departments and keeps employees working by providing timely treatment for non-life-threatening illnesses or injuries.

The clinic opened two months after Covenant launched an urgent care in Farragut. Covenant now operates clinics in Farragut, Maryville North, Maryville South, North Knoxville, Sevierville and South Knoxville, with new sites planned for Cumberland Avenue and Hardin Valley.

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McNealy breaks Lady Ads rebounding record

Jake Nichols

jnichols@farragutpress.com

With 3:54 left in the second quarter against Rhea County on Tuesday, Jan. 6, Farragut senior KJ McNealy darted into the lane and leaped for the ball as it caromed off the right side of the backboard.

When she emerged from the scrum, ball in hand, McNealy became the Lady Admirals' new program leader in rebounds with 1,010.

In the process, she broke a 23-year-old record held by 2002

Farragut graduate and former FHS assistant coach Alex Munday, who finished her career with 1,009.

"This is actually her first year not being here," McNealy said of Munday. "So I broke her record of rebounds in a game two years ago, and then she texted me this week about breaking this one. It was really sweet, so I was aware of it."

On the play in question, McNealy utilized the same tools that led her to sign with Grand Canyon University: effort and physicality.

"It happens a lot," she said, shrugging off the physical nature

of rebounding in general. "It's a lot harder because as tall people, we get hung on, pushed out, dirty stuff all the time. But, I've tried to go offensive rebound as much as I can. Anyone can get one if they just go after the ball, and that's always what I've done."

Farragut coach Jason Mayfield echoed that sentiment, noting how well that play encapsulates McNealy's style on the floor.

"KJ is looking to rebound every shot, defensively or offensively,"

See MCNEALY on Page 4B



Jake Nichols

Farragut senior KJ McNealy (22) smiles while high-fiving a teammate during introductions before the Lady Admirals' game against Rhea County on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

Lady Ads left smiling after big week



Jake Nichols

Farragut senior Reagan Sheridan (12) goes in for a layup against Rhea County on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

Jake Nichols

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Trinity Curry looked surprised then broke into a grin near the Farragut bench last Thursday night.

Teammate Lilly Mullins had just leaped into Curry's arms to celebrate Curry's first 3-pointer of the season, which she nailed during the Lady Admirals' 75-17 win over West on Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026.

That victory made up one part of a milestone week for the Lady Ads as they returned home following a post-holiday tournament in Gatlinburg.

"I didn't think it was going in, but I'm glad they trusted in me," Curry said of her shot. "I was like, 'Lilly, what are you doing?' But it was pretty funny though."

Two days prior, FHS took down Rhea County in district action Tuesday, Jan. 6. That 58-49 win featured 20 points from Zoe Porter, who hit five first-half 3-pointers in the win to pace the Lady Ads.

"She's getting better defensively and in her decision-making, but she's a person that's stepped into that role with Gabby (Vanacker) and Livi (Slagle) hurt," Farragut girls coach Jason Mayfield said. "We've told her to fire it up when you see an opening, and she has done a really good job of that."

Later in that same game, senior KJ McNealy set a new program rebounding record when she passed former Farragut assistant coach and 2002 graduate Alex Munday in career boards.

After the win and the record, Mayfield still noted a defensive lapse

through the first portion of the game. But FHS put on the clamps in the second half to pull away.

"We were a step slow defensively, just not there," Mayfield said. "But we held them to eight points the last 10 minutes, so that was much better."

West was a different story, as Farragut jumped out to a 19-2 lead and never let up. The final tally saw five players reach double figures: Makenna Hartley (14), Curry (13), Porter (12 on four 3-pointers) and Reagan Sheridan (10).

Two of the Lady Ads' first-quarter points came from Raina Styles, who returned from injury against a Lady Rebels team that has dealt with some hardships of its own.

"They're dealing with some injuries and stuff like we are, and theirs is more recent," Mayfield said. "But I felt like we put 32 minutes together and there weren't a lot of lapses. (Styles) made a jump shot early in the game, so it was good to see them cheering for her."

Mayfield noted Vanacker was cleared last week, though she has moved slowly toward a return depending on how her knee responds.

And the moment from Curry? It was icing on the cake from a week to remember.

"We want her to post more, and that's the main thing, but she can step out and shoot it," Mayfield said. "Her making that shot was fun. I can't say enough about the culture of our program and our kids. It was a great culture when I took over 14 years ago, and I feel like we've continued that tradition."

Ads unafrican to spread wealth for success

Jake Nichols

jnichols@farragutpress.com

J.P. Burris has a saying he repeats often to his Farragut boys basketball team: "Us is greater than you."

Translation? "Share the ball," Burris said. "Play together."

The Admirals answered that call perfectly this week, beating Rhea County 87-63 on Tuesday, Jan. 6, in a District 4-A matchup. Two days later, they dispatched West 72-59 on Thursday, Jan. 8, in a non-district affair.

Against Rhea County, FHS saw six double-digit scorers. Reid Vining led the way with 19 points; Dan Lanning



Jake Nichols

Admirals senior Dan Lanning (2) looks to maneuver around Rhea County's Miles Phillips (24) during their game on Jan. 6.

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Panthers smother Hawks in district tilt

Jake Nichols
jnichols@farragutpress.com

LENOIR CITY — CJ Martin drove the lane last Friday, Jan. 9, his intent clear as he barreled onward.

Panthers defender Hunter Click slid over to cut off the Hardin Valley sophomore, then Lenoir City's Ben Barr and Jagger McKelvey converged to leave Martin with no escape.

The ball slid from his grasp as the game slipped away from Hardin Valley, which fell to Lenoir City, 69-57, in a District 4-A battle.

The loss brought a harsh end to a mixed week for the Hawks as they beat Jefferson County 66-58, in a non-district affair on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

Kymani Smith led HVA with 14 points that night while Colin Dyrness added 12 with 11 from Kristian Oliver.

Two days later, a bout of sickness left two of those scorers hampered against Lenoir City.

But, Arendt cited his team's physicality as the primary difference in the two outings.

"One of the differences was



Jake Nichols

Lenoir City defenders Hunter Click (11), Ben Barr (31) and Jagger McKelvey (4) converge on Hardin Valley sophomore CJ Martin (1) during their game at Lenoir City High School.

my two lead guards had the flu, so they weren't very good tonight," Arendt said Friday. "But again, it's the same thing. They were more physical. Jeff County was just as physical, but we made a choice in that game to play hard and to do our work early and keep them out of the paint. Today, we let

them punk us."

In the scoring column Friday, three Panthers reached double digits: Barr (14), Preston Smith (13) and McKelvey (12). Jax Sparks led HVA with 17, nine on three triples, while Dyrness buried three more 3-pointers as part of an 11-point outing.



Jake Nichols

Hardin Valley's Emma Rhoden (21) goes baseline against a Lenoir City defender.

Lady Hawks grounded in district loss

Jake Nichols

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just two juniors listed on the team.

With that ratio, the future is laid out in two separate points.

"I think our future is bright, and we are excited about that," Galloway said. "But our future is also next week, so we are preparing for that, too."

Lineberry, a sophomore, gave a glimpse of that future Friday when she drew a foul and clapped as she strode to the charity stripe.

A few feet away, the Lady Hawks cheered as Lineberry prepared to loft two free throws.

"She got in foul trouble early, so she was excited to get back out there," Galloway said of Lineberry. "I felt like she took her frustration out in an aggressive way offensively and defensively, which is what we needed to get us going."

HVA will look to keep that energy going this week facing Oak Ridge Friday night, Jan. 16. The Lady Hawks also took on Rhea County Tuesday, Jan. 13, though the game took place after press time.

"The season is barely halfway finished, so we've got a long way to go," Galloway said. "A lot of games left so one game does not define us. We shot the ball really well against Jeff County, so we know it's there. We've got bigs that can score and girls that can hit 3s, so once we can do all that on the same night, we'll be a dangerous team."

Lady Bulldogs win, lack consistency

Ken Lay
Correspondent

KNOXVILLE — Despite seeing his team pick up a key District 4-A victory at home early last week, Bearden High School girls basketball coach Justin Underwood admitted that he was a bit frustrated.

"We played well in spurts but we also had spurts where we were spectators," Underwood said after the Lady Bulldogs toppled Lenoir City, 66-50, on Tuesday, Jan. 6, at Bearden High. "That's a little frustrating."

"I know it's a Tuesday night game and I know that we're just getting back in school af-

ter the break, but we have to be more consistent."

The Lady Bulldogs had a 40-16 lead at halftime against the Lady Panthers, coached by former Webb School of Knoxville head coach Shelley Collier.

But Bearden got a little sloppy after the break and Lenoir City took advantage of some Bearden miscues. The Lady Panthers scored the first seven points of the second half and pulled to within 40-23 with six minutes, one second remaining in the third quarter after Lexi Varner buried a three-point shot.

From there, Bearden and Lenoir City slugged through an evenly-matched third frame

as both teams scored 16 points over that eight-minute span.

"They have some good players and they made some shots," Underwood said of the Lady Panthers. "And Shelley does a great job."

Lenoir City, despite being behind big after three quarters, didn't go away and they made things a bit more interesting by outscoring Bearden, 18-10, over the final eight minutes of the contest.

Lenoir City had three players post double figures in the scoring column but that trio of players did most of its damage with the game's outcome no

See **BULLDOGS** on Page 4B

Dawgs declaw Panthers 81-49

Ken Lay
Correspondent

KNOXVILLE — Bearden High School boys basketball coach Jeremy Parrott was a bit concerned before his team resumed District 4-A play in the new calendar year.

And his worries looked to be warranted early as the Bulldogs struggled to manufacture offense early in their league tilt against Lenoir City, as the game remained scoreless for nearly the first four minutes.

And when a team finally broke the offensive drought, it

was the Panthers that grabbed the lead when Ben Barr made a basket with 4 minutes, 17 seconds remaining in the opening frame.

Bearden would finally get untracked and rout the Panthers, 81-49, on Tuesday, Jan. 6, at BHS.

"We were worried about that," Parrott said of his squad's early offensive struggles. "We spent Christmas break at a tough tournament and we played three games against teams that were nationally ranked, two of which, we won.

"Our guys have to be ready to play, regardless of the environment and who the opponent is. We struggled early, but eventually we got it together and we were able to do enough to win the game."

The Bulldogs would establish a bit of offensive rhythm and open an 18-11 lead by the end of the opening frame.

Bearden would also control the glass as they rebounded well and those rebounds and play stifling defense that would ultimately land the Bulldogs for the 17th time in 18 games.

Upcoming Community events to share?

Send press releases and details to editor@farragutpress.com

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Caroline Helton

Congratulations to Caroline Helton, a kindergartener at Farragut Primary School, for winning the Good Neighbor Character Award presented by Mansour Hasan, State Farm Agent. Caroline was chosen for exemplifying friendliness. "Caroline is a shining example of what it means to be a great kindergarten student," said her teacher, Mrs. Stackhouse. "She works hard every day, stays highly motivated, and always tries her best. She is kind and helpful to others including her teacher, a friend to everyone, and a natural leader in the classroom. Her bright attitude and positive spirit make our class a better place!"



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FARRAGUT WEST KNOX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Holiday Open House

Farragut West Knox Chamber of Commerce welcomed Chamber members and guests to its annual Holiday Open House in Farragut Community Center Tuesday, Dec. 9.

Along with networking, it offered a number of tasty treats from its members, existing and new. All the while, attendees could support a member non-profit, Knoxville Family Justice Center, with donations.



From left, Mark Chase, Alexis Hatfield and Brenda Herron with Copper Cellar Marketplace



Amy Shewmake, left, owner of Simply Magical Vacations by Amy, and Stephanie Erb with Family Justice Center



Ted Kotulski, left, and Robin Sheldon with Superior Carpets



Scott Kimsey, left, of The Casual Plnt with Michelle Armstrong, mortgage consultant, and Josh Robinette



Trisha Kelly, left, owner of Classy Caterer and Elizabeth Rosenbalm, co-owner of Good Batch Mama



John Haney, left, senior advisor with NAI KoellalRM Moore, and Joe Perrock, owner of Premier Event Services



Joe Ray with Hyperion Networks



Andrena Middleton, left, and Savannah Cates with City Catering



PJ Dieffenbach, owner of Web Mavericks

Ads**From page 1B**

supplemented with 16 and Britton Lewis added 12 points. Matthew Dickens, Aiden Foshie and Parker Lane scored 10 each.

Forty-eight hours later, all but one of those guys hit double-digits again in the Admirals' win over West: Vining and Lewis with 16 each, Foshie with 13, Lane with 12 and Dickens with 11 points.

Each game featured a few different elements, but one constant remained: Farragut's ability to spread the wealth.

"We have several guys that can score," Burris summarized. "Any night, any one of them can go off. When we share the ball, I feel like we're harder to guard because we have several options."

Vining showed out, registering a double-double in each matchup. He also rocked the rim with four dunks, three against Rhea County with one more against the Rebels.

"He's averaging a double-double, which is phenomenal," Burris said of Vining. "The dunks are nice, but we also feed off his energy when he's rebounding, running in transition and making post moves, too. It's all a culmination of his work since he was a freshman."

The Ads shot out to a hot start against Rhea County, building an 11-7 lead before the Eagles clawed back into it. Lane drove into the paint for a layup and a 26-24 lead.

From there, FHS took off on a 16-0 run to take a firm advantage that remained through the final buzzer.

Things were not quite as simple against West, as the Rebels hung around late enough to be within nine points in the closing moments.

But late free throws from the Admirals' upperclassmen sealed the win, as they nailed 10 shots from the charity stripe in the fourth quarter.

"We have not shot free throws well this year, and we work on them every day, so it's starting to pay off," Burris said. "That and getting stops are signs that we have improved, because we've lost games by one possession that came down to those things."

With two big wins behind them, the Admirals turned their attention to McMinn County Tuesday night, Jan. 13. That game took place after press time, though FHS also has a massive rivalry tilt with Bearden set for Friday. The Bulldogs were listed as the No. 2 team in Class 4A in this week's Prep Poll.



File photo

The Hardin Valley boys soccer team won its second state title in program history on May 23, 2025. This year the Hawks will look to go back-to-back in Class 3A.

Eye out**From page 1B**

will be looking for similar finishes after ending on strong notes last year, and the Bearden Lady Bulldogs will be seeking vengeance in Class 4A basketball with a push for a fifth state title in six years in soccer.

"We return a really strong core group," BHS coach Ryan Radcliffe said. "I think only three of our starters were seniors. So seven returners out of our starting group. I also think we have a really strong freshmen class coming in that I'm extremely excited about."

"It will be tough to replace the scoring output of Tyler Roth and Jayla Blue, but I think we'll still have a really strong core group returning."

FHS baseball will be looking for a fifth straight state title this spring. The Ads



Hodge

McNealy**From page 1B**

he said. "She does a great job, and as long and athletic as she is, that fits her to a tee."

McNealy ended the night with 1,012 career rebounds, racking up eight against the Lady Eagles.

will be operating without long-time ace Cole Draper, but they return plenty of experience in 2026.

"Even though we've had success the last four years, our goal doesn't really change," second-year coach Garrett Copeland said. "We return a lot of the same guys that are coming back to play this year. I think we'll have to fill a void on the pitching staff with (Draper) gone, but we have talented players who will fill that just fine."

The Farragut Middle School softball program, Farragut Middle School cheer program and West Valley Middle girls basketball program will all be looking to go back-to-back as well.

In swimming, Hardin Valley senior Hayden Hall and Bearden junior Sarah Griffith will look for more gold after winning it all in the 200-yard freestyle and 1-meter dive, respectively.

FHS will look for another state title in track under new coach Charles Bell, while the cross country program features a new coach in Garrett Jones.

Also, Webb will look for a 4-peat at the Division II-AA

"It's awesome," Mayfield added. "She's a very talented player and came in with a desire to rebound. Her push to do those little things is really helpful; and (Munday) knows her really well, so Alex was really thrilled for her. It was pretty cool."



File photo

The Farragut track program won a state title in May, ending Chelsea Osborne's final season with a bang. This year the Ads will look to go back-to-back under the tutelage of new coach Charles Bell.

state championships in cross country.

In other football news, Concord Christian will be looking to build off its first-ever playoff appearance and How the West was Won title, while Bearden looks to build off an 0-9 campaign. At FHS, the Admirals will be looking to build off a 3-8 season in Geoff Courtney's second season.

The Webb girls soccer program will be looking to avenge two straight District II-AA championship losses, both to Baylor, while the Hardin Val-

ley football program will seek to build off its first .500 or better season since 2018.

CAK will be pushing for even more history after capturing its first Division II-A playoff win in school history last year, while Hardin Valley's flag football program is looking to pull another state title in a sport that is relatively new to the area.

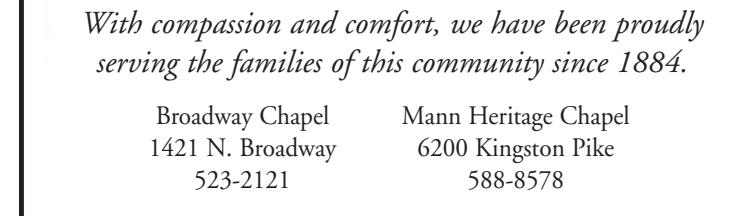
Finally, the Heidi's Gymnastics team placed third out of 40 teams at Nationals, while the Village Green swim team won its first title since 2011.

Bulldogs**From page 2B**

longer in doubt.

Kara Gresham had 15 points,

including 12 over the final 16 minutes of the contest. Varner had 13 in the game and Rylee Bolling had 12, including eight after halftime.



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FARRAGUTPRESS WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026 • 5B



Chair-ish the moment

FHS Education Foundation holds gala for auditorium renovations

Tammy Cheek
tcheek@farragutpress.com

About 150 attended the 2nd Annual Farragut High School Education Foundation gala, Chair-Ish the Moment, in Fox Den Country Club Saturday, Jan. 10, to help raise money to support FHS Education Foundation.

"Usually every year, we kind of set out with some very specific goals in addition to some of the general projects and student initiatives we try to fund," foundation president Toni Scott said. "This year's project is called Chair-ish the Moment because we are trying to bolster our fund and be able to replace [the chairs] and renovate the auditorium.

"We have a lot of seating that is no longer fixable," she said. "I believe they are antiques at this point."

"It actually was a project that the school and, I believe, maybe some groups had started before COVID," Scott said.

"Then, with COVID and some other things, it didn't reach completion so we're hoping to be able to do that."

She expects the foundation will need to raise for the auditorium project about \$50,000.

In 2019, students wanted to replace the seating in the auditorium, FHS principal Dr. John Bartlett said during his address after dinner.

"They're broken. You have to go to an antique seat dealer to get the parts," he added. "I was told last night that they can't get the parts from the antique seat dealer anymore, so we're taking the parts from the balcony [seats] to fix the seats on the floor."

"It would be dreamy to think that (\$50,000) would be attainable this evening," Scott said. "But generally thinking, we're just trying to generate drops in the bucket tonight and also just engage with some of the different corporations, businesses and people in the community."



Photo submitted

Farragut High School's Education Foundation event committee consisted of, from left, Amanda Zeller, Ashley Swor, Wendy Stiles, Andrea Miller, Betsy Priest, Ashley Alexander, Allison Prosan and president Toni Scott.

"And, we have really fantastic support," she added. "I can only speak for this year and last year ... but I do feel that we have a lot of great community support and partners."

Still, "we're trying to increase our visibility and continue to build on those relationships," Scott said. "We also have a lot of alumni, both on our foundation board and people who came this evening who have students or have had students who go through the Farragut schools. That is a relationship we also want to con-

tinue to build up."

The evening started with cocktails, featuring music provided by FHS Sound Waves vocal jazz ensemble, FHS Music Man Quartet from the theater class' production and a strings group coming to play during dinner.

"That's our kids," said Bartlett, who has been FHS principal since 2019. "That's our future."

"Every year, I'm amazed by our kids," he added. "I'm able to brag on our kids."

"We're so excited about it,"

Scott said about the evening's activities. "We have some groups at the high school who have put together a video for us of some different activities on campus that the foundation has been able to support, so we'll have a video presentation."

A silent auction and dinner followed the cocktails, then FHS principal Dr. John Bartlett addressed attendees. Completing the evening, University of Tennessee's DJ, Stearl the Pearl provided music for dancing.

press planner

• MEDIC has seen a significant increase in demand for O blood types. Eligible donors are encouraged to donate as soon as possible. All O negative and O positive donors will receive a \$25 e-gift card with their successful donation. Appointments are not required but encouraged. Appointments can be made online at www.medicblood.org, via the MEDIC app, or by calling 865-524-3074. Walk-ins are welcome.

• The American Red Cross and National Football League are partnering in January for National Blood Donor Month. As a thank-you to donors for helping address the need for blood during the critical post-holiday time, those who come to give through Jan. 25 will be automatically entered for a chance to win a Super Bowl LX giveaway. For full details, visit RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl. Make an appointment to give blood or platelets by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App or calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

• The CAC Office on Aging's Senior Companion Program will host its annual Snowflake Ball on Saturday, Jan. 31, from 6 to 9:30 p.m. at the Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike in Knoxville. Dance the night away at this fundraising event benefitting the Senior Companion Program. The Snowflake Ball will feature the Ensemble Swingtime Band, dinner and a silent auction. Attendees also vote for their favorite Snowflake Ball king and queen nominees and watch the crowning to close out the evening. For tickets and more information, visit knoxniers.org.

• Tennessee Artists Association is offering a \$500 scholarship to a deserving senior to be used at any two-year or four-year technical school, college or university or independent study toward a certificate or degree in the arts. Applications now are available and are due by Tuesday, March 3. The Official TAA Scholarship application form is available from: taafindout@gmail.com/scholarship. Additional information can be found at Tennessee Artists Association website: tnartists.org or by e-mail at taafindout@gmail.com.

FBI visits FHS

Former agent inspires students

Staff Reports
editor@farragutpress.com

Former FBI agent and recent New York Times best-selling author Scott Payne recently paid his annual visit to Allison Maldonado's Farragut High School's Spanish and 2020 dual enrollment class.

"I love for students to make a connection between what they are studying in Spanish class and real-life application of their Spanish skills in their future careers," Maldonado said.

Since Maldonado started teaching DE Spanish at FHS in 2015, a yearly visit of FBI agents has been a part of the course.

"Payne has been enthralling my students with his experiences for the last seven years," Maldonado said. "And along with the annual FBI visits, students learn how agents have used Spanish on the job and how useful it is to be able to communicate with said language."

"You do not have to be com-

pletely fluent in Spanish to get your point across, but knowing compliance commands and having a good understanding of Spanish can go a long way, whether trying to help Spanish-speaking people or questioning them," Payne said.

"I was not sure if Agent Payne would be able to speak to my class this year, given his new best-selling author status and busy schedule on book tours and podcast guest obligations," Maldonado noted. "But Agent Payne came through for me and spent 90 minutes talking with the class about his undercover work and use of Spanish."

"In particular, Agent Payne spoke about assignments in Texas, trying to eliminate drug cartel operations and finding family members who had been abducted by cartel members," she said. "Agent Payne also spoke to the class about his other assignments, such as leading investigations on motorcycle gangs and drug



Photo submitted

Farragut High School security officer Richard McNutt is pictured with FBI Agent Scott Payne.

trafficking, violent crime and domestic terrorism, to mention a few.

"My students and I really appreciated Agent Payne taking the time to come to class," Maldonado said. "Agent Payne is a force of nature, and he is also a humble, kind, funny and phenomenal story teller."

"It was such a cool experience," said Jane Davanzo, a

Spanish DE student in Maldonado's class.

"I learned so much about law enforcement and have so much respect for people like Agent Payne."

Another student, James Nguyen, added, "Agent Scott's stories about his time working with the FBI were extremely cool, interesting and engaging."

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